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Human Security Concept: The root of U.S. National Security and Foreign Policy

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Executive Summary

Title: Human Security Concept: The root of U.S. National Security and Foreign Policy

Author: Major Stephen L. Cosby, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The United States National Security Strategy (NSS) based on force should be replaced with a NSS based on Human Security.

Discussion: The concept of human security was first defined by the UN Development Program (UNDP) in 1994. It was defined as the security of persons in seven domains: economic security (assured basic income); food security (physical and economic access to food); health security (relative freedom from disease and infection); environmental security (access to sanitary water supply, clean air and a non-degraded land system); personal security (security from physical violence and threats); community security (security of cultural identity); and political security (protection of basic human rights and freedoms). A distinction was drawn between human development which is about widening people's economic choices and human security which is about people being able to exercise these choices safely and freely.

Conclusion: In order for the United States to continue to don the mantle of world super power and police the world, it must develop a National Security Strategy and Foreign Policy that is rooted in human security initiatives. Human security policy and action will empower the U.S to seize the advantages of global interdependence, and to redeem its leadership role in forging a sustainable and democratic future for all who seek it.

The United States is a global super power and in its pursuit of national objectives it uses diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) instruments of national power to influence other nations. In this role the United States will continue to find itself involved in the internal matters of other countries, it cannot however expect brute force to serve as the only answer to current and emerging global security threats. Each problem/threat in every part of the world is unique. Every problem has its source. The President and members of congress need to examine every situation with care before venturing to "swoop in and save the day." History and culture must be studied. In order for the United States to continue to don the mantle of world super power and police the world, it must develop a National Security Strategy and Foreign Policy that is rooted in human security initiatives.¹

The concept of human security adds value when it assists the planning and implementation of practical programs of action. Human security can add value in at least five ways. First, it can provide a clear and compelling objective for humanitarian work. Second, it has a preventive aspect, which can stimulate forward-looking contingency planning. Third, it emphasizes global interdependence and can therefore mobilize additional resources and new partnerships. Fourth, it addresses interacting threats in multiple domains and can therefore stimulate holistic, comprehensive threat assessment and program planning. Finally it can be

¹ De Leon, Frederick, "The role of a Super Power", pg 1-3

²Jeong, Ho-Wan. "A Conceptual Analysis of Human Security and Conflict" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Le Centre Sheraton Hotel, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Mar 17, 2004* <Not Available>. 2009-02-06 <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p74180_index.html>

used to integrate and bind the U.S.'s elements of national power, Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economics.

What Is Human Security?

Human Security is based on Human Rights and places people at the centre of international relations. It recognizes interdependence between rich and poor countries, and by focusing on the causes of problems, not just the symptoms. A Human Security perspective emphasizes that by reducing poverty afar, we enhance our own safety.² In the literature devoted to international relations and to development issues it has been referred to in various terms: as a new theory or concept, as a starting point for analysis, a world view, a political agenda, or as a policy framework. Although the definition of human security remains an open question, there is consensus among its advocates that there should be a shift of attention from a state centered to a people-centered approach to security; that concern with the security of state borders should give way to concern with the security of the people who live within those borders.³ Human security is more than the absence of conflict. It encompasses education and health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. It may be referred to as the concept of "freedom from want and fear", which includes economic, food, health, environmental, political, community and personal security.

The interrelated challenges of human security and peace require an integrated multilateral response of the international system, a consistent human security policy that focuses on the responsibility of each and everyone. In short, it is a call for the globalization of responsibility for

³ Human Security: Concepts and Implications, pg 5

http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/publica/etude/etude117_118.pdf

human security. However, "security between states remains a necessary condition for the security of people. The principal objective of national security is the protection of territorial integrity and political sovereignty from external aggression. While declining in frequency, the threat of interstate war has not vanished, and the potential consequences of such a war should not be underestimated. Technological advances and proliferation of weaponry mean that future wars between states will exact a horrific toll on civilians. At the same time national security based on force alone is insufficient to guarantee people's security."⁴

The concept of human security was first defined by the UN Development Program (UNDP) in 1994. It was defined as the security of persons in seven domains: economic security (assured basic income); food security (physical and economic access to food); health security (relative freedom from disease and infection); environmental security (access to sanitary water supply, clean air and a non-degraded land system); personal security (security from physical violence and threats); community security (security of cultural identity); and political security (protection of basic human rights and freedoms).⁵ A distinction was drawn between human development which is about widening people's economic choices and human security which is about people being able to exercise these choices safely and freely.⁶

⁴ Axworthy, Lloyd, Canada Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Human Security: Safety for People In a Changing World," April 1999

⁵ Human Development Report 1994, pg 24-25; http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_chap2.pdf

⁶ Leaning, Jennifer and Arie, Sam, "Human Security: A Framework for Assessment In Conflict and Transition," USAID December 2000

The US can Apply the Human Security Strategy in Afghanistan

Human security is an evolving principle for organizing humanitarian endeavors. It places the welfare of people at the core of programs and policies, is community oriented and seeks to prevent harm. It recognizes the mutual vulnerability of all people and the growing global interdependence that mark the current era. By combining these features in one concept, human security facilitates the organizing of humanitarian initiatives that require cooperation by a variety of actors working in multiple sectors. Human-security principles are especially applicable to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, for two reasons. First, the current foreign intervention in Afghanistan is a product of global interdependence, terrorism providing the link between disorder in Afghanistan and the security of prosperous countries, particularly the United States. Second, the reconstruction of Afghanistan calls for a high level of cooperation across sectors and agencies.

“The people of Afghanistan have for over twenty years faced violence, lawlessness, torture, killing, rape, expulsions, displacement, looting, and every other part of the litany of suffering that characterizes today's transnational wars.”⁷ Foreign powers one after another, have destroyed the irrigation systems, mined the pastures, leveled the cities, cratered the roads, blasted the schools, and arrested, tortured, killed, and expelled the educated. The insecurity due to the absence of stable institutions and the effect on the population accounts for many of the threats that Afghanistan has posed. The rise and fall of one warlord or armed group (terrorists) after another is largely accounted for by the ease with which an organization can raise an army in such an impoverished, ungoverned society. One meal a day can recruit a soldier. No authorities

⁷ Rubin, Barnett, “Afghanistan and Threats to Human Security”, <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/rubin.htm>

impede arms trafficking, and no one with power has enough stake in the international order to pay it heed. The expansion of the cultivation and trafficking of opium poppy constituted a survival strategy for the peasantry in this high-risk environment. Opium cultivation supplies not only income and employment, but cash for food security. "Afghanistan used to be self-sufficient in food production, but it now produces less than two thirds of its needs. Payment for poppy constitutes the main source of income, and the cash derived from these transactions enabled many rural families to buy food and other necessities through the winter."⁸

Afghanistan also faces a challenge of information; it has no institutions capable of generating information about the society that could be used to govern it. Over the past two decades Afghanistan has been ruled, in whole or in part, at times badly and at times atrociously, but it has not been governed. Above all, the crisis of human security in Afghanistan is due to the destruction of institutions of legitimate governance. It is as much an institutional emergency as a humanitarian emergency. Accountable institutions of governance that use information to design policies to build the human capital of their citizens and support their citizens' economic and social efforts, and that allow others to monitor them through free exchange of information, are the keys to human security.

In order for the U.S. to pursue a viable human security strategy in Afghanistan it will require a gradual shift of perspective from short- to medium- to long-term development. The pursuit of sustainable development policies will mean abandoning stop-gap measures, such as quick impact projects and short-term planning in order to focus on medium and long term

⁸ Rubin, Barnett, "Afghanistan and Threats to Human Security", <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/rubin.htm>

interventions.⁹ President Obama's decision to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan may temporarily solve some security problems, but it will take a long term economic and reconstruction plan to make Afghanistan truly a more secure nation.

Dr. Pauletta Ottis during a lecture to student at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College is quoted as saying, "...in many countries emerging from war, overt armed conflict may come to an end while low-level violence continues for many years, involving former factions, demobilized combatants, bandits and militias. Military and diplomatic measures, though important, are unlikely by themselves to secure a transition towards a stable peace."¹⁰ For development and democracy to take root, the manner in which the reconstruction is structured (needs assessed, resources allocated, partners chosen, programs implemented and results monitored) can either provide a positive incentive to nation-building, or, on the other hand, destroy its very foundations.

In this perspective, reconstruction must be carefully planned as an integral part of the overall peace-building agenda, one that generates trust in institutions, promotes civil participation, heals wounds and restores dignity. Insecurity is cited by many Afghans as the greatest problem they face in their daily lives and the one for which they demand the most urgent action. Basic security is necessary not only for reconstruction and development efforts, but for the protection of human rights and building the rule of law. Only when Afghans feel safer will

⁹ The Asia Foundation, "State Building, Political Progression, and Human Security in Afghanistan," http://asiafoundation.org/pdf/Afghan_Report_April082007.pdf

¹⁰ 2009 Marine Corps Command and Staff Conference Group 3 lecture/discussion on reconstruction of Japan and Germany after WWII

they credit the Afghan government, the U.S. and its NATO allies for their efforts.¹¹ The Afghan people must be the center of gravity when developing solutions to making the country of Afghanistan a more stable member of the global society.

Integrating Human Security Approach into Foreign Policy

Adopting a human security approach would require reorienting development and security programs and plans to respond to new challenges. It would mean a) correlating programs in areas that are interconnected but which have often been handled by separate initiatives that act at cross-purposes b) recognizing potential threats through systematic human security assessments sensitive to early warning signs c) building capacity for dialogue among global communities.

The concept of human security adds value when it assists the planning and implementation of practical programs of action. Human security can add value in at least five ways. First, it can provide a clear and compelling objective for humanitarian work. Second, it has a preventive aspect, which can stimulate forward-looking contingency planning. Third, it emphasizes global interdependence and can therefore mobilize additional resources and new partnerships. Fourth, it addresses interacting threats in multiple domains and can therefore stimulate holistic, comprehensive threat assessment and program planning. Finally it can be used to integrate and bind the U.S.'s elements of national power, Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economics.¹²

¹¹ Human Rights Watch letter to President Barack Obama on Afghanistan, written by Brad Adam, Asia Director and Tom Malinowski, Washington Advocacy Director; <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/03/26/human-rights-watch-letter-president-barack-obama-afghanistan>

¹² Axworthy, Lloyd, Canada Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Human Security: Safety for People In a Changing World," April 1999; Section VI Foreign Policy Implications

Human Security Complements National Security

“Human security does not supplant national security. A human security perspective asserts that the security of the state is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means of ensuring security for its people. In this context, state security and human security are mutually supportive. Building an effective, democratic state that values its own people and protects minorities is a central strategy for promoting human security. At the same time, improving the human security of its people strengthens the legitimacy, stability, and security of a state. When states are externally aggressive, internally repressive, or too weak to govern effectively, they threaten the security of people. Where human security exists as a fact rather than an aspiration, these conditions can be attributed in large measure to the effective governance of states. From a human security perspective, concern for the safety of people extends beyond borders. Although broadening the focus of security policy beyond citizens may at first appear to be a radical shift, it is a logical extension of current approaches to international peace and security.

The Charter of the United Nations embodies the view that security cannot be achieved by a single state in isolation. The phrase "international peace and security" implies that the security of one state depends on the security of other states. A human security perspective builds on this logic by noting that the security of people in one part of the world depends on the security of people elsewhere. A secure and stable world order is built both from the top down, and from the bottom up. The security of states, and the maintenance of international peace and security, are ultimately constructed on the foundation of people who are secure.”¹³

¹³ Axworthy, Lloyd, Canada Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Human Security: Safety for People In a Changing World," April 1999; Section IV A NECESSARY COMPLEMENT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

This concept is not new to the United States as President George W. Bush touched on the concept in his 2006 National Security Strategy, in which he outlined a security strategy with two pillars rooted in human security initiatives. The first pillar is, “promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity –working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies.” It states that, “free governments are accountable to their people, govern their territory effectively, and pursue economic and political policies that benefit their citizens; free governments do not oppress their people or attack other free nations. Peace and international stability are most reliably built a on foundation of freedom.” The second pillar addresses the challenges and threats the United States and the global community face that are not bound by borders such as pandemic disease, proliferations of weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters and terrorism.¹⁴

In reference the failed national security strategy for Iraq, President Bush was asked the following three key questions by a congressional oversight committee:

- What political, economic and security conditions must be achieved before the United States can draw down and withdraw military forces from Iraq?
- Why has security conditions continued to worsen even as Iraq has met political milestones, increased the number of trained and equipped forces, and increasingly assumed the lead for security?

¹⁴ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006

•If existing U.S. political, economic, and security measures are not reducing violence in Iraq, what additional measures, if any, will the administration propose for stemming the violence?¹⁵

The President responded by publishing a National Strategy for Victory in Iraq, again rooted in human security initiative with measurements of progress towards meeting political, economic, and security objectives in Iraq. The objective of the strategy was to help the Iraqi people build a new Iraq with a constitutional and representative government that respects political and human rights and with sufficient security forces to maintain domestic order and keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. To achieve this end, the United States pursued an integrated strategy along three broad tracks:

- 1) Political: Helping the Iraqi people forge a broadly supported compact for democratic government.
- 2) Economic: Assisting the Iraqi government in establishing the foundations for a sound economy with the capacity to deliver essential services to its people.
- 3) Security: Developing Iraqi capacity to secure their country while carrying out a campaign to defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency.¹⁶

President Obama has made it clear that he believe that we need to target all sources of insecurity through a new hemispheric security initiative. His new security initiative is focused

¹⁵ Testimony For the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations; House Committee on Government Reform, "Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the Security Situation", pg 1

¹⁶ Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq (personal security); http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/Iraq_Reports/docs/2006-02-Report.pdf

on, “fostering cooperation within the region to combat gangs, trafficking and violent criminal activity. It strives to find the best practices that work globally as well as tailor approaches to fit each country. Develop and support democracies that are strong and sustainable in the day to day lives of their people and increase support for the building blocks of durable democracies—strong legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, vibrant civil society, honest police forces, religious freedom, and the rule of law.”¹⁷

The strategic salience of human security for the United States is higher than it has been since the height of the Cold War. What takes place within states is of intense concern to those outside, particularly to the United States in its role as engineer of global and regional order. Interconnectedness between states, their permeability, the globalization of economies, the transparency arising from information technology, and the intermixing of people around the world give every conflict regional and global repercussions. “In an increasingly interconnected world,” states the National Security Strategy of the United States, “regional crisis can strain our alliances, rekindle rivalries among the major powers, and create horrifying affronts to human dignity.”¹⁸ “In Colombia, for instance, “the link between terrorist and extremist groups challenges the security of the state” while in Africa, “civil wars spread beyond borders to create regional war zones. ”Internal conflicts create refugee flows which destabilize neighboring states. They often spawn organized crime as rebels turn to smuggling to raise capital and acquire weaponry. As the images of internal war are broadcast or emailed around the world, awareness rises and, with it, demands for action or intervention. The days are gone when millions could die in civil

¹⁷ Obama/Biden website, “The Change we need”.

http://origin.barackobama.com/issues/foreign_policy/#diplomacy

¹⁸ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002 p.9

wars with barely a whisper to the outside world. Internal conflicts and the weak states or ungoverned areas they create often serve as breeding grounds for terrorism, so the connection between internal conflict and American security is direct.

Human Security and Terrorism

When the United States and its allies were planning the post-world war order after 1945 they started well in advance in thinking about economic and social cooperation, which would also improve the living standards of those nations with which they were still in war. They were planning international political and economic institutions in order to achieve economic growth and social progress for all nations. One of the root causes of the Second World War was considered the international economic crisis in the 20s and early 30s which made it possible for a person like Hitler to come to power and for a people like the Germans to follow him as their leader.

After the Second World War a U.S. General was quoted as saying "...it is of vast importance that our people reach some general understanding of what the complications really are, rather than react from a passion or a prejudice or an emotion of the moment....It is virtually impossible at this distance merely by reading, or listening, or even seeing photographs or motion pictures, to grasp at all the real significance of the situation. And yet the whole world of the future hangs on a proper judgment." "The speaker was General George C. Marshall, outlining the Marshall Plan in an address at Harvard University on June 5, 1947. Surveying the wrecked economies of Europe, Marshall noted the "possibilities of disturbances arising as a result of the desperation of the people concerned." He said that there could be "no political stability and no assured peace" without economic security, and that U.S. policy was "directed not against any

country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos." The Marshall Plan was a big economic effort of the United States to rebuild the destroyed economies in Europe and to transform former enemies into partners.

"As President Obama and his advisors review the current national strategy and prepare to adjust the U.S.'s foreign policy, they might also consider the relevance of Marshall's strategy to the moral and political problems America now confronts. Of course the U.S. should find the people responsible for the deaths of September 11 and bring them to justice, and work with other nations to root out other terrorist networks. But they must do so in a way that does not result in the deaths of even more innocent people, deaths that would only deepen the cycle of anger and lead to more September 11 type attacks."²⁰

Extremism itself is both an outcome and a driver of insecurity. In the post Cold War period, international terrorism is reported to be the only form of political violence that is on the rise. The September 2001 attacks in the United States served as a watershed in global awareness of terrorist activities. However, from the perspective of seven years later, a tragic consequence is that the U.S. seems to have been so focused on retribution and addressing the problem through the use of force that it has paid little attention to the obvious need of dealing with the root causes that fuel extremist ideologies. The tools of globalization, such as television and the Internet, have also made the imbalance in wealth and living standards more glaringly visible and thereby even less sustainable in the long run. The attributes of globalization such as ease of travel,

²⁰ Bell, Dick and Renner, Michael, "A New Marshall Plan? Advancing Human Security and Controlling Terrorism", World Watch Institute. <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/1706>. Copyright notice: This article may be copied, used on web sites, or otherwise reproduced without charge providing that the user include the address of the Worldwatch web site (<http://www.worldwatch.org>) and attribute the article to the Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20036.

interlinking of financial institutions, social networking over the internet, and greater access to advanced technology have arguably made it easier for extremist groups to operate and spread their ideology.²¹

Against this backdrop, it should be apparent why conventional concepts of security rooted in the protection of national borders are no longer adequate. Most of the drivers of insecurity are without borders. When an extremist group emerges in the Middle East, it will make everyone insecure. If a new strain of bird flu appears in Asia, everyone should be seriously concern. If a new civil war breaks out in an African state, every global citizen should be disturbed. The probability is that all these could affect each person sooner or later. The modern age requires that global community think in terms of human security, a concept without borders that acknowledges the inherent linkages between development, human rights and peace.

While national security is just as relevant as before, the strategies to achieve it must be much more global than in the recent past, and the remedies must be centered on the welfare of the individual and not simply focused on the security of the state. The concept of human security is straightforward: every individual has the right to live in peace, freedom and dignity. Unless the governments of the world understand this and set it as their goal, they will not truly have either national or international security. On 4 October 2002, UNSG Kofi Annan authored an article on "World inclusivity" in the International Herald Tribune, speaking about a "new insecurity" since September 11th and concluding "Peace, tolerance, mutual respect, human rights, the rule of law and the global economy are all among the casualties of the terrorists' acts". He also states: "We cannot continue to exclude the poor, the disenfranchised or those who are denied basic rights to

²¹ Dr. Muqtedar Khan, "Terrorism and Globalization" GlocalEye. <http://www.glocaleye.org/terglo.htm>

liberty and self-determination. Or that if we do, we cannot at the same time hope to secure lasting peace and prosperity”.

Summary

Human security has now reached the point where it has to be operationalized into concrete policies and actions. During these times of crises and uncertainties, when the world is facing financial instability with mounting pressures from globalization and inequality, poverty, infectious epidemics, and the many intra-state conflicts and other human insecurities, human security offers a new hope in addressing these issues. Human security can indeed offer new windows for meeting the U.S.'s security challenges of today. Building a holistic view requires emphasizing three areas: use of force, prevention of conflicts and international cooperation. From this point of view, human security is an emerging issue, which can give greater cohesion to interaction between international security and state security.

This is the true value of human security as a concept, and as a program for policy and action. Conceptually, human security integrates dynamics of sustainable and democratic development in the practical protection of human rights. Politically, it presents a coherent framework for pragmatic, cooperative action in alliances of governments, NGOs, local communities, global networks, business enterprises, labor unions, scholars and all the other productive collectivities of human achievement. More than that, human security empowers societies to rethink the deepest purposes of governance, inside countries and throughout the global community and to act with best effect. The chief characteristic of globalization is the interdependence that now embraces us all. Human security policy and action will empower the

U.S to seize the advantages of global interdependence, and to redeem its leadership role in forging a sustainable and democratic future for all who seek it.

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